

**Maine Revised Statutes**  
**Title 22: HEALTH AND WELFARE**  
**Chapter 851: GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**§3104. STATEWIDE FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

**1. Program required.** The department shall:

A. Administer a statewide program in accordance with the related requirements and regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Education; and [ 2009, c. 291, §2 (AMD) . ]

B. Cooperate with and participate in the administration of food distribution programs in conformity with regulations promulgated by the United States Department of Agriculture. [ 1977, c. 462, (NEW) . ]

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (AMD) . ]

**2. Costs.**

[ 1981, c. 703, Pt. A, §21 (RP) . ]

**3. Authorization of emergency food stamp benefits prior to full verification.**

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (RP) . ]

**3-A. Authorization of emergency food supplement benefits prior to full verification.** Whenever an applicant for benefits under the food supplement program states to the department that the applicant is in need of immediate food assistance, the department shall, pending verification, issue and mail an electronic benefits transfer card authorizing the applicant to purchase food at the time of the department's initial interview with the applicant or within one working day of the interview, as long as all of the following conditions are met.

A. As a result of the initial interview with the applicant, the department must have determined that the household of the applicant will probably be eligible for food supplement program benefits after full verification is completed. [ 2009, c. 291, §2 (NEW) . ]

B. When possible, the applicant shall submit to the department, at the time of the initial interview, adequate documentation to verify that the applicant is in need of immediate food assistance. [ 2009, c. 291, §2 (NEW) . ]

C. When adequate documentation is not available at the time of the initial interview, the department shall contact at least one other person for the purpose of obtaining information to confirm the applicant's statements about the applicant's need for immediate food assistance. [ 2009, c. 291, §2 (NEW) . ]

The authorization to receive food supplement program benefits under this section may not exceed 30 days from the date that the applicant receives the authorizing card. Additional food supplement program benefits may not be issued to the applicant's household until full verification has been obtained that confirms the eligibility of the household.

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (NEW) . ]

**4. Mail issuance of coupons.**

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (RP) . ]

**4-A. Electronic benefits transfer system.** The department shall operate a system of issuance of food allotments through an electronic benefits transfer system as authorized by and in conformity with regulations promulgated by the United States Department of Agriculture.

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (NEW) .]

**5. Outreach.** It is the intent of the Legislature that the department fully carry out all outreach activities established by federal regulation to encourage the participation of all eligible households.

In carrying out its outreach activities, the department shall insure that all applicants and recipients are informed of their right to have the requirement for a face-to-face interview waived as provided by federal regulations.

[ 1979, c. 386, (NEW) .]

**6. Bilingual requirements.**

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (RP) .]

**7. Verification of information.** The department shall establish and implement uniform verification procedures that will be applied to all applicants and recipients.

[ 1979, c. 386, (NEW) .]

**8. Certification periods.** Households must be certified for a 12-month period unless there is a likelihood of change in income or household status.

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (AMD) .]

**9. Information on notice to recipients.** All notices of denial, reduction of benefits, termination of benefits, fraud claims, nonfraud claims or other actions must contain information on the appeal procedure, and the availability of free legal representation in the geographic area and must include, at a minimum, the address and telephone number for these services.

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (AMD) .]

**10. Supplemental monthly issuance.** Whenever a household receiving benefits through the food supplement program informs the department of a change in circumstances that will result in an increase in its food supplement benefit, the department shall issue a supplemental allotment to that household for the month in which the change is reported. The supplemental allotment must represent the difference between the amount for which the household was originally certified in that month and the amount for which it is actually eligible as a result of its reported change in circumstances.

The department shall issue that supplemental allotment within 5 working days of the date that the change in circumstances was reported.

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (AMD) .]

**11. Food supplement program overpayment recovery.** Any money recovered by the department as a result of the overpayment of food supplement benefits must be deposited to the General Fund, including any money up to a maximum of \$81,475 recovered prior to March 14, 1991.

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (AMD) .]

**12. Penalty.** The unauthorized issuance, redemption, use, transfer, acquisition, alteration or possession of coupons or other program access device, including an electronic benefits transfer card, may subject an individual, partnership, corporation or other legal entity to prosecution by the State in accordance with Sections 15 (b) and 15 (c) of the federal Food Stamp Act of 1977 and the federal Food and Nutrition Act of 2008. Penalties are in accordance with those outlined in federal law or regulations. A person who knowingly engages in trafficking in benefits as defined by 7 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 271.2 commits a Class D crime.

[ 2011, c. 687, §10 (AMD) .]

**13. Categorical eligibility.** The department shall adopt rules that maximize access to the food supplement program for households in which there is a child who would be a dependent child under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program but that do not receive a monthly cash assistance grant from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Under rules adopted pursuant to this subsection, certain of these families must be authorized to receive referral services provided through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families block grant and be categorically eligible for the food supplement program in accordance with federal law. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (AMD) .]

**14. Prohibition against denial of assistance based on drug conviction.** A person who is otherwise eligible to receive food assistance under the federal Food Stamp Act of 1977, 7 United States Code, Sections 2011 to 2036 and under the federal Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 may not be denied assistance because the person has been convicted of a drug-related felony as described in the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104-193, Section 115, 110 Stat. 2105.

[ 2009, c. 291, §2 (AMD) .]

#### SECTION HISTORY

1971, c. 463, §1 (RPR). 1973, c. 183, (AMD). 1973, c. 314, (AMD). 1973, c. 674, §1 (RPR). 1975, c. 293, §4 (AMD). 1977, c. 462, (RPR). 1979, c. 386, (AMD). 1981, c. 136, (AMD). 1981, c. 703, §A21 (AMD). 1991, c. 9, §K1 (AMD). RR 1993, c. 2, §14 (COR). 1995, c. 418, §A4 (AMD). 1999, c. 637, §1 (AMD). 2001, c. 598, §1 (AMD). 2009, c. 291, §2 (AMD). 2011, c. 687, §10 (AMD).

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